

HR Corner

A mindful approach

by Colette Wong



Terenia Tabor
head of training
MindChamps (Hong
Kong) Limited
Photo: Edde Ngan

Stringent recruitment process and comprehensive training schedule ensure perfect fit

With the growing emphasis on child education, parents and educators are constantly seeking new and stimulating methods to unleash the potential in children. Success of such talent development process, however, depends heavily on the quality of teachers who in essence play a "make or break" role.

As one of the world's leading educational institutes in mind development, MindChamps (Hong Kong) Limited is well aware of this and selects its trainers through a stringent yet creative process. According to Terenia Tabor, MindChamps' head of training, only three to five per cent of candidates with extensive educational qualifications and expertise make it through the lengthy recruitment process. "First and foremost, our trainers must share our vision of empowering young children," Ms Tabor says.

Nine stages

The selection and training for MindChamps trainers begin with a phone interview where individual candidates talk about their current jobs and their interests in MindChamps, and explain their teaching methodology. Ms Tabor notes that such phone conversations yield an initial impression of the candidates' energy and communication style.

Shortlisted candidates are then invited to attend a series of MindChamps' creative workshops. During the first workshop, potential trainers teach a 10-minute session to demonstrate their teaching style and interaction skills. "They share with us an inspirational story in a classroom setting which helps us to assess their personalities and flair for engaging the audience," Ms Tabor adds.

Inspiration is a keyword in the second selection workshop, where candidates elaborate their thoughts on questions about their life experience and visions as educators. The answers give important insights into the psychology and level of creativity of the candidates. At this point, they are given further information about MindChamps. This allows them to discuss the ways in which they would incorporate the company's philosophy into their teaching methodology.

The subsequent personal interviews, which mark the fifth stage of the selection process, are the most crucial in ensuring a perfect match between MindChamps and its potential trainers. "One of the key questions is how certain events in their life have shaped their aspirations as teachers," Ms Tabor points out. "It's important to learn about how our potential trainers deal with stress and overcome challenges. Their mental capacity reveals how they translate certain situations into their ways of motivating our students."

She adds that thorough reference checks are in place at the last stage of the selection, since MindChamps places great emphasis on work ethics. "We make it a point to get an alternative perspective on candidates' personal attributes and their interaction with children in their previous jobs."

Two-prong training

The handful of prospective MindChamps trainers then go through intensive training and practice, which aligns them with the company's teaching strategies and techniques. The tri-weekly, three-hour sessions include practical instruction, scientific background and creativity exercises. There are observation classes with experienced trainers, during which the candidates get further insights into lesson planning and communication with students.

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At the end of the six-week training, each candidate is required to give a 15- to 20-minute teaching session using MindChamps content and techniques. They are expected to demonstrate their ability to stimulate students and to help them achieve self-empowerment. "Our mission is to look for the champion mindset in children," Ms Tabor expands. "We believe in giving positive feedback to our students to help them improve themselves."

Continuous improvement is a central theme in the careers of all MindChamps trainers. Further workshops and briefing in teaching techniques are important aids, while training in classroom management helps trainers to handle children. Ms Tabor also meets regularly with the trainers to update them on any changes in the company's strategies and to evaluate areas for further training.

While MindChamps employs its own unique teaching techniques, Ms Tabor states that the company is always on the lookout for external training for its trainers. "That depends on the development of individual trainers. Some of them may wish to make certain changes in their teaching style, while others might need more practice. We discuss these issues in the briefing sessions and this helps me determine the best ways to help the trainers perfect their delivery in the classroom."

Beyond all the hard work and constant challenges, Ms Tabor stresses that the trainers' training at MindChamps is a fun experience. The trainers immerse themselves in new knowledge and witness the development in each other as they bond and share their experience as a group. "It's a wonderful process during which we expand our mind as we learn how to do the same for the children," Ms Tabor concludes.

Salient points

- Nine-stage recruitment process finds the right fit
- Structured training a quality assurance mechanism
- Trainers immersed in learning culture

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